

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

ER 84-445/7

AH ER 83-5984

31 May 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Robert M. Kimmitt  
Executive Secretary, National Security Council

SUBJECT: Sandinista Violations of Human Rights

REFERENCE: Your Memorandum of 29 May 1984, Subject: Sandinista  
Violations of Human Rights.

1. Page three, the third paragraph on Edgard Macias Gomez. The second sentence should read "He represented a threat to the FSLN because he could become an influential critic as a former member of the governing coalition."

2. Page four, fifth paragraph should read, "The Catholic Church into an agent".

3. Page nine, third paragraph, the words "up to" should be deleted from the last sentence.

4. Page eleven, the last sentence of the third paragraph should read, "this is dominated by the Sandinistas".

25X1

Executive Secretary

cc: Mr. Charles Hill  
Executive Secretary  
Department of State

Col. John H. Stanford  
Executive Secretary  
Department of Defense

Distribution:

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**  
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Remarks

Executive Secretary

**29 May 84**

Date

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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May 29, 1984

Executive Registry

84-44516

AH. ER 84-5984

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. CHARLES HILL  
Executive Secretary  
Department of State

COL (P) JOHN STANFORD  
Executive Secretary  
Department of Defense

Executive Secretary  
Central Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: White House Digest re Sandinista  
Violations of Human Rights

The attached White House Digest is submitted for final  
review/clearance. Please submit comments by May 31.

*Robert M. Kimmitt*  
Robert M. Kimmitt  
Executive Secretary

Attachment

White House Digest

25X1

C-387

## SANDINISTA VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Miskitos and many other refugees-turned-guerrillas say that while Somoza was interested only in controlling Nicaragua's wealth, the Sandinistas want to control the minds of the people. (1)

When the Sandinistas marched triumphantly into Managua on July 19, 1979, they promised the cheering masses that the Nicaragua of tomorrow would enjoy unfettered political pluralism, a free, mixed economy, and true non-alignment.

But in the more than four years of Sandinista rule, the self-appointed guardians of Sandino's revolution have not only ignored their victory promises, but have systematically trampled on every aspect of human rights -- from the censorship of the press and the postponement of elections to the indefinite suspension of constitutional guarantees.

Individuals as well as institutions are targets of the ruling party, the FSLN (Sandinista Front for the Liberation of Nicaragua). The following incidents are not isolated events but reveal an official policy based on a true disregard for the rights of the individual, especially those considered threats to the revolution.

### "Ajusiticimientos"

In July 1979, under the guise of "ajusiticimientos," or "acts of justice," the FSLN carried out a deliberate campaign of murder and revenge on individuals they had determined to be "informers and assassins" of the ousted regime of Anastasio Somoza.

Nicaraguan officials admitted to the summary executions of several hundred prisoners in the early days of the Revolution. (2) According to Jose Esteban Gonzalez, head of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua, 2,000 Nicaraguans were executed in the first months of the new regime. (3)

### "Shot While Attempting to Escape"

Franklin Montenegro and another man called Aguilera were junior National Guard officers who had been a part of Somoza's security apparatus. During the July 1979 bloodbath, Aguilera and Montenegro were imprisoned but not killed.

Later, the FSLN Directorate decided that the two should indeed be killed, even though the period of "ajusiticimientos" had

passed. The Directorate arranged for Aguilera and Montenegro to be shot "while attempting to escape" during a supposed transfer from one prison to another.

### The Attack on Private Enterprise

The murder of Jorge Salazar in November 1980 was the FSLN Directorate's first major act of repression directed against a representative of the private sector. The machinations culminating in Salazar's death were designed to goad the private sector into actively opposing the Sandinistas.

The FSLN wanted to keep them from forming an effective armed resistance, but at the same time, provoke them into some type of armed action which would justify Sandinista reprisals. This action, and the anticipated Sandinista response to it, would prevent the private sector from forming any political program to interfere with FSLN plans for the pluralist front being prepared for the 1985 elections.

Jose Maria Lau, aide to the Chief of State Security Lenin Cerna, was chosen to run this operation. In addition to Lau, Security selected several others to be placed in COSEP (Higher Council for Private Enterprise) and the democratic parties to act as provocateurs. Once infiltrated into their respective organizations, Lau and his collaborators found their targets were not really interested in armed opposition.

The democratic parties and the COSEP did, however, begin to aggressively speak out against the FSLN. The Directorate then decided it was time to give the Nicaraguan people a sign that the "burgesia" remained dangerous and could well take up arms against the revolution.

Salazar, president of the agro-industrialists and a very prominent man, was chosen as victim. A false arms transfer was staged by State Security and Salazar was killed in cold blood. Salazar's widow, Lucia, is now the human rights coordinator for the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, one of the groups that has taken up arms against the Sandinistas.

Mrs. Salazar, who lost a brother in Somoza's prisons before her husband was killed by the Sandinistas, had this to say about the Sandinistas and human rights:

"I would say that all human rights are violated in Nicaragua every single day and every single hour." (4)

The decision to kill Salazar was made by Cerna and Juan Jose Ubeda, Deputy Chief of State Security. According to the official version, Salazar was planning armed resistance to the FSLN. The net effect of his murder was to intimidate the private sector.

On October 20, 1981, COSEP published an open letter criticizing Humberto Ortega's statement that the Sandinista

government could "in a matter of hours," take over everything that "the bourgeoisie still possesses." The letter accused the government of egregious economic mismanagement, and the Sandinista doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, for the country's deepening economic crisis. (5)

The Sandinista government quickly reacted to this letter. By midnight the same day, state security forces arrested four COSEP leaders in their homes for "violation of the economic and social emergency law."

Three of those arrested were sentenced to seven months in jail on October 30. They were Enrique Dreyfus, President of COSEP, Benjamin Lanzas, President of the Chamber of Construction, and Gilberto Cuadra, President of the Federation of Nicaraguan Professionals.

Similar sentences were handed down to three other businessmen who fled into exile in Venezuela and the U.S. This left the private sector in Nicaragua leaderless, and with few anti-Sandinistas willing to assume such a risky role. Under continued international pressure, the Sandinistas finally released the COSEP leaders on 14 February, 1982.

#### Edgard Macias Gomez

The case of former Vice-Minister of Labor under the new FSLN regime, Edgard Macias Gomez, demonstrates the extreme pressure and propaganda methods used by the Nicaraguan State Security Service (SDGSE) in their efforts to denigrate the character of an individual.

When appointed Vice Minister of Labor, Macias was already President of the Popular Social Christian Party (PPSC), one of the political parties which formed the coalition known as Frente Patriotico (FP). The FP follows the Sandinista line. Macias saw his party losing more and more of its independence to the FSLN party.

To devote his full efforts to countering this influence, Macias resigned his official position as Vice Minister of Labor in the spring of 1982. He now represented a threat to FSLN dominance of the FP and consequently to the assurance that the FSLN party would prevail in the 1985 "election process."

To destroy Macias, his character and credibility, using controlled media, the FSLN mounted an intense defamation campaign against both him and his wife. The pressure became so great that the Macias' had to leave Nicaragua.

## Religious Persecution

The Sandinistas have also targeted Nicaragua's Catholic Church. Their intention is to neutralize growing opposition both from the Catholic hierarchy and from rank and file Catholics by splitting the Church.

The Sandinistas have tried to create a so-called Popular Church and portray it as the friend of the people, casting the legitimate Church in the role of enemy, especially of the poor. (6)

The Sandinista policy toward the Catholic Church was set in September 1979 and is summarized in the 72 Hour Document, which resulted from an extraordinary meeting held from 21-23 September, 1979. The FSLN Directorate and top level cadre participated.

According to the Document, the Catholic Church is to be treated cordially, "following a cautious policy designed to neutralize conservative elements, develop close ties with sympathetic elements and stimulate the revolutionary sectors." (7)

Nicaraguan priests and bishops have opposed the transformation of the Catholic Church into a branch of the Sandinista government. They have been subjected to threats, mob violence, and physical abuse. In one particularly appalling incident, Father Bismark Carballo, spokesman for Archbishop Obando y Bravo, was forced to strip and paraded in front of government television cameras.

These acts of intimidation against priests and faithful loyal to the Pope and their Bishops not only violate international standards of behavior, but the Sandinistas own law as well. Article 19 of the Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans provides that "even in cases of emergency," freedom of thought, conscience and religion cannot be suspended. (8)

The Sandinistas also succeeded in disrupting the Pope's Mass in Managua last March. The front seats in the square where Mass was held were reserved for Sandinistas armed with microphones who repeatedly interrupted the Pontiff.

While the Pope was blessing the Consecrated Host, Sandinista activists began to make speeches from the altar. When a group of five or six Catholics tried to climb the stairs to help the Pope, Lenin Cerna, head of State Security, threatened them with a machine gun. (9)

The Pope's Mass and the Sandinistas' attempt to portray John Paul as the enemy of the revolution was the turning point in European support for the Sandinista regime, according to some observers. Heavily Catholic countries such as Spain and Italy began to rethink their diplomatic support for Sandinismo. (10)

This persecution has not been limited to Catholics. Members of the Moravian Church of the Atlantic Coast have had their religion and culture systematically attacked. Clergy and civic and church leaders have been jailed, exiled or otherwise harassed. Protestant churches have been burned or seized for use as Sandinista military barracks.

At the general triennial synod of the Nicaraguan Moravian Church in 1983, two Sandinista military commanders attended and interfered with the business of the church. They warned against the election of certain pastors to high church office. They had already closed down the Moravian Biblical Institute, adversely affecting the education and training of Moravian clergy.

Nicaragua's small Jewish community has also been the subject of persecution. Disguised as attacks on former Somoza supporters, the efforts are more likely related to the FSLN's long relationship with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Anti-Semitic rhetoric, the attempt to set fire to the main door of the Managua synagogue (while the faithful were inside) and the subsequent confiscation of this synagogue (the only one in the city) indicate that the actions that drove most of the Jewish community into exile were not mere anti-capitalism. Rather, it was an attack on a small, and therefore vulnerable, community that represented opposition to Sandinista totalitarianism.

### Torture

According to Miguel Bolanos Hunter, a former State Security agent who defected last summer, Sandinista Security officials make use of KGB methods of psychological torture. Jails where interrogations are carried on are constructed for this type of human rights violation. Their layouts have been brought from Cuba and are based on KGB models. Bolanos also charges that the interrogators are Cuban-trained. (11)

The relatively sophisticated methods of torture used to extract information are used in addition to more traditional forms of physical mistreatment used to intimidate or simply eliminate enemies.

For example, prisoners reportedly were kept in cramped dark cells and fed at irregular intervals to disorient them. They are also ordered to use only their prison number and not their name, and are subjected to threats.

These methods are sometimes used against the regime's political opponents. There is no shortage of political prisoners in Sandinista Nicaragua. A March 1981 New York Times article charged that the Sandinistas were holding 4,170 political prisoners. (12)



Torture is not merely psychological. During 1983, the Permanent Commission on Human Rights compiled data on 102 instances of physical abuse and torture. One detained Nicaraguan stated that security forces kept him naked in a cold cell with a ceiling so low that he could not stand upright. He said he was pressured into signing a document obliging him to inform on his friends and neighbors.

Reportedly, security forces physically abused and threatened alleged guerrillas, subversives and political suspects., Nicaraguans who fled to Costa Rica and Honduras reported incidents of rape, torture, and the murder of children by the Sandinista Popular Army and security forces.

Interior Minister Tomas Borge, head of the regime's secret police, admitted that many cases of physical abuse and a few of killing of detained persons by security forces occurred, but he claimed that the Government was working to resolve the problem.

#### Prudencio Baltodano

One of the most shocking stories to come out of Sandinista Nicaragua in recent weeks is that of Prudencio Baltodano, a Pentacostal preacher and a victim of Sandinista torture. In February 1984, Baltodano, with one other man and about 40 women and children, fled the scene of a battle between Sandinista troops and anti-government forces of ARDE.

The group was captured by Sandinista soldiers. Baltodano and the other man were separated from the others and beaten. Upon learning the names of their captives, the soldiers accused Baltodano of recruiting people to fight against the government. They tied him to a tree and told him: "You still don't know what we do to evangelical pastors. We are Communists and don't believe in God."

While tied up, Baltodano was hit in the forehead with a rifle butt, had his throat cut with a bayonet and had both ears cut off. The Sandinista soldiers left him to bleed to death. Baltodano survived, however, and is now in the U.S. bearing witness to what happened to him. He asserts that his experience is by no means unique and he has seen the bodies of other people mutilated even more brutally. (13)

#### Tipitapa

Recent reporting from a variety of sources indicates that the FSLN has violated the human rights of political prisoners. In the early morning hours of 11 October 1983, violence broke out at the Modelo prison called Tipitapa, a "model" prison approximately 24 kilometers (15 miles) from Managua.

The confrontation resulted in the deaths of several political prisoners (only political prisoners are incarcerated at Modelo).

Accounts differ as to what caused the prison guards to open fire on the prisoners and how many were killed.

The fact that neither the Sandinistas nor the government Human Rights Commission in Managua was willing to make a clarifying statement indicates the whole affair was being covered up. Four days after the event, and after denying both foreign journalists and independent human rights agencies access to the prison, the Sandinistas announced that nothing at all happened at Tipitapa.

### Persecutions of the Indians

Some of the most severe examples of Sandinista repression have been committed against Managua's large Indian population, especially the Miskito, Rama and Sumo Indian groups that inhabit the steamy Atlantic Coast. The recent flight of over 1,000 Indians, led by a Roman Catholic Bishop, highlights their plight. Just this past April, hundreds more Miskito Indians escaped into Honduras.

These Indians have been subjected to religious persecution, destruction of their crops, and forced relocation, causing many thousands to flee across the border into Honduras. (14) Those unable or unwilling to leave their ancient homelands are subjected to heavy-handed attempts, occasionally including rape and murder, to bring Sandinista totalitarianism to the traditionally autonomous Indian population.

### Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or Correspondence

The Nicaraguan government has developed an elaborate and effective security/intelligence network employing both government security service organs and a variety of Sandinista organizations, such as the Sandinista Defense Committees, modeled on the notorious Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, to ferret out dissidents and real or alleged subversives.

These organizations tolerate everyday grumbling about inflation, commodity scarcities, and non-sensitive government policies. However, individuals who openly criticize the "revolutionary process" or its leadership are frequently subjected to pressure ranging from public ridicule and defacement of his home by Sandinista mobs to loss of employment and even detention.

The Sandinista Defense Committees, or CDSs, organized in most neighborhoods throughout the country, serve as a network of informers and as an instrument of political intimidation. Members are exhorted to be alert for signs of subversive ideas and to seek out dissidents to convert them into Sandinista supporters.

Participation is supposed to be voluntary in the Defense Committees and in Committee activities such as political education meetings and "Revolutionary Vigilance," a program in which Committee members stand watch over their neighborhood during hours of darkness.

However, the Sandinistas employ many methods to entice or pressure individuals into joining the Defense Committees, including Committee control over the distribution of ration cards for the purchase of subsidized basic products such as rice, beans and soap. A Nicaraguan citizen reported the following in March 1983:

"We all have to join [the CDSs]. If you don't, they call you a contra, their term for a counterrevolutionary, and you don't get an identification card to buy basic foods at cheap prices." (15)

This constitutes not only a method of inflicting punishment without trial, but an attack on freedom of speech and freedom of association. The system also invites abuse, since the accusation of "counterrevolutionary" can be used to settle private scores having nothing to do with politics.

Linked to the Defense Committees are the "turbas divinas" (literally, "divine mobs"). Sometimes "turbas" composed of scores of Sandinista supporters demonstrated in front of the homes or offices of opposition figures, chanting slogans and threats and defacing buildings with pro-government graffiti. The mobs rarely resorted to violence against persons, but in some instances scuffles occurred and minor injuries resulted.

While the government takes no responsibility for the actions of the mobs, it regards them as "legitimate expressions of the popular will" and does not interfere to protect the rights of those against whom they are demonstrating. There is little doubt that the government targets those persons against whom it wants the mobs to demonstrate.

The State of Emergency suspended the legal requirement for a search warrant. Police and State Security officials regularly enter and search private residences. The government opens private mail, and officials meticulously inspect the baggage and personal effects of both arriving and departing international travelers and confiscate any items or literature, including newspapers from neighboring countries, alleged to be subversive.

Nicaraguans are also being urged to spy on one another. One Sandinista leader publicly urged the Defense Committees to take action against anyone heard listening to a foreign radio news broadcast. There have been some reports that teachers in public schools have asked children to spy on their parents and report suspicious activity. (16)

### Trade Union Freedoms

The Sandinistas have been working steadily since they took power in 1979 to bring all independent trade unions under their control. Both the Christian Democratic oriented National Workers Central (CTN) and the independent Confederation of Labor Unity (CUS) have been subject to repeated harassment, arrests, and threats.

In June the government packed the convention of the Steve-dores' Union in Corinto to prevent it from switching its affiliation from the Sandinista Workers Central (SWC) to the CUS. Leaders of this union, which supported the 1979 revolution, have been forced to flee the country and others have been arrested. Other members of the union have been fired because of their desire to disaffiliate from the SWC.

### Freedom of the Press

Although the Sandinista regime's capricious censors relaxed their censorship of La Prensa for a short period beginning in August, all mechanisms of censorship remain in place for both the print and broadcast media. This means that even stricter censorship can be reimposed at any time. In fact, since the beginning of this year La Prensa has refused to publish five times because up to so many of its articles have been censored.

Until recently, news items on arrests of opposition figures, expropriations, and any criticism of government policy have not been permitted, and editorial commentary is rarely approved. In late October a Church communique on the mob attacks against the Church was censored.

According to the Inter-American Press Association, which includes newspapers in Canada, the United States and Latin America, the most serious case of press censorship in the hemisphere "continues to be Nicaragua, where the independent newspaper La Prensa is the chief victim." (17)

La Prensa is now the only independent source of print news in Nicaragua. Every line of type in La Prensa must be submitted to government censors before it can be published. The editors of the paper report that between January and October 1983 the government censored over 50% of their stories on current national and international events.

Since the rescue mission in Grenada and the fall of the Marxist-Leninist regime there, censorship has been relaxed somewhat, but is still severe. Censorship is capricious and unpredictable.

During 1983, the government censored articles about an attack on the house of a former government junta member, a letter from the Catholic Bishops criticizing the proposed military draft

law, a letter to the government from 12 U.S. Congressmen, and items on Afghanistan, Managua firemen, and street repairs.

Among items frequently censored are not only political commentary, but also straightforward reports of Nicaragua's bad economic situation. This kind of censorship seems to reflect the totalitarian assumption that everything that takes place in the country is (or ought to be) the responsibility of the government. Therefore, criticism of anything that happens is a criticism of the government.

Even without censorship, La Prensa's readership is largely confined to Managua. The people who live in much of the rest of Nicaragua depend on radio for information.

Since March 1982 the Sandinistas have enforced censorship of independent radio stations by demanding the contents of daily programs before transmission, and in June government censors prohibited Radio Mundial, one of Nicaragua's oldest and most respected radio stations, from carrying any news from the Voice of America.

The station responded by stopping all news broadcasts, leaving pro-FSLN Radio Noticias as the last "independent" news station in Nicaragua. Radio Mundial has suffered continuing harassment since then. The relaxation of censorship in recent weeks has not reached Radio Mundial or any of the other radio stations.

#### The 1985 "Electoral Process"

The numerous human rights violations of the Sandinistas since their ascension to power in 1979 might be somewhat more tolerable if the people of Nicaragua could look forward to ousting those guilty through the electoral process. Sadly, they will probably not have this opportunity.

As Eduardo Rivas, legal counsel for the independent Human Rights Commission in Nicaragua, put it recently: "The Sandinistas take two steps closer to complete Marxist dictatorship, and then they ease up one step for publicity purposes." (18)

The Sandinista record has been one of consistently trying to eliminate, intimidate or co-opt any potential source of opposition. The examples of Sandinista behavior toward labor unions, COSEP, the Churches, the press, and the Indians demonstrate this clearly.

Given this record, it is not surprising that Sandinista leaders have said the purpose of elections is to ratify the "revolution."

There are many obstacles to free and fair elections: media access, the exclusion of the leadership of the armed opposition

from participation, the continuation of press censorship, the State of Emergency, the special tribunals, continued Sandinista intimidation of the opposition, and Sandinista access to state institutions and resources for partisan political purposes.

A Sandinista victory would convey greater international legitimacy to the Sandinistas. Therefore, it is important for the FSLN that the process itself and the victory the Sandinistas hope for be perceived as truly democratic.

The political parties law, promulgated on September 16, 1983, requires that all parties competing for power support and defend the Sandinista revolution in consolidating its "political, economic and social conquests." The legal status of opposition parties can be revoked if this restriction is not met.

The body that will make such a decision, and in fact will have the greatest say in the implementation of the political parties law, is called the National Council of Political Parties. This will be dominated by the Sandinistas.

Against this stacked deck, the Sandinistas treat their belated recognition that, perhaps in theory, another political party may dislodge the FSLN, as a major concession.

The law also commits the government to allowing outdoor meetings and rallies by political parties. These activities, however, are allowed "in accordance with legislation in effect at the time." (19) This means that if the current State of Emergency is not lifted, meetings and rallies can still be restricted, as they are now.

### Conclusion

The revolution that toppled the Somoza regime and brought the Sandinistas to power reflected the hopes of the Nicaraguan people that democracy would come to their country.

An essential part of any regime wishing to call itself democratic is respect for fundamental human rights. For the Communist leadership of Nicaragua, such respect is incompatible with their Marxist-Leninist principles. Consequently, they have succeeded in surpassing even the Somoza regime in the flagrant disregard for fundamental human rights.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights in Nicaragua has been reporting on the human rights situation in Nicaragua since 1977 but its leaders find international human rights organizations much less interested in their reports of abuses under the Sandinistas than those under Somoza.

Few Americans would be willing to live under a government that:

- restricted their practice of religion,

- encouraged their friends and neighbors to spy on them,
- impeded the formation of free labor unions,
- rationed all basic food items regardless of availability
- required internal passports to move about the country
- banned short wave radios
- and censored the news they would read and hear.

Yet over four years after promising free elections and political pluralism, this is the type of government the Sandinistas have inflicted on the people of Nicaragua.

#### Footnotes

1. Ted Thomas, "Nicaraguans' fight for freedom gets John Paul II's firm support." Washington Times April 13, 1983 p. 7A
2. New York Times March 5, 1981 p. A2
3. Address to the Outreach Working Group on Central America, 2 May 1984. This estimate covers the period from July 1979 to February 1980 and is based on his own physical inspections of mass grave sites. The Permanent Commission was and remains extremely critical of both the Somoza and Sandinista regimes.
4. Washington Times 20 October, 1983 p. 3C
5. The Permanent Committee for Nicaraguan Human Rights: "A Union Report on Nicaragua."
6. Radio Sandino, Managua June 10, 1981
7. Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista Peoples' Revolution Section 3 "The Problem of the Character of Our Revolution."
8. Nicaragua's Human Rights Record: Comments, Analysis and Background Information on the Report of the Government of Nicaragua to the Human Rights Committee The International League for Human Rights, New York, N.Y. March 1983
9. "The Subversion of the Church in Nicaragua," Briefing Paper The Institute on Religion and Democracy, December, 1983
10. Stephen Kinzer, "Disillusion With Nicaragua Grows in Europe," New York Times November 16, 1983 p. A6
11. "Inside Communist Nicaragua: the Miguel Bolanos Transcripts," Heritage Foundation Background no. 294 September 30, 1983

12. New York Times, March 5, 1981 p. A2
13. Sworn statement of Prudencio Baltodano before the Nicaragua Council for Human Rights. 14 March, 1984.
14. Miskito Indian Council of Ancients of Misurasata. Testimony presented to the Organization of American States, May, 1981 - October, 1982 .
15. Carl J. Migdail, "Nicaragua's Leftist Rulers - Defiant as Ever," U.S. News and World Report, 14 March, 1983 p. 29
16. Robert S. Greenberger and Sonia L. Nazario, "Sandinistas Stiffen their hold on Nicaragua," The Wall Street Journal, 15 March, 1984 p. 34
17. "Press-freedom panel faults Nicaragua," The Washington Times, March 28, 1983 p. 7A
18. David Asman, "Are Sandinist Changes for Real?" The Wall Street Journal December 9, 1983 p. 30
19. The Political Parties Law was published in Barricada, the Sandinista official newspaper, on 15 September, 1983. A translation appears in Foreign Broadcast Information Service 22 September, 1983. The provision cited is Article 6b.



Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

84 - 445/5

Att. ER 83-5984

2 March 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Robert M. Kimmitt  
Executive Secretary  
National Security Council

SUBJECT: Review of White House Digest Drafts

REFERENCE: Your Memorandum dated 29 February 1984,  
Subject as Above

We have reviewed the White House Digest Drafts forwarded by reference - again from an intelligence point of view only - and have noted that our comments forwarded on 9 February have been incorporated and have no further comments.



Executive Secretary

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TBC:kac  2 March 84)

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

Executive Registry

84 - 445/4

February 29, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR Mr. Charles Hill  
Executive Secretary  
Department of State

Col. (P) John H. Stanford  
Executive Secretary  
Department of Defense  
/

Executive Secretary  
Central Intelligence Agency

25X1

SUBJECT: Review of White House Digest Drafts

The attached three drafts have been informally reviewed by your agencies and those comments/changes have been incorporated into the attached drafts. We are now requesting formal review. The three White House Digests are:

- "The Strategic and Economic Importance of the Caribbean Sea Lanes;"
- "Soviet Objectives and Intentions in Latin America;"
- "Nicaraguan Repression of Miskito Indians."

Please provide comments or clearance by Wednesday, March 7, 1984. Thank you.

  
Robert Kimmitt  
Executive Secretary

Attachments  
White House Digest Drafts

cc: Faith Ryan Whittlesey, White House

DC  
ENCL  
REG

The Strategic and Economic Importance of the  
Caribbean Sea Lanes

The Caribbean Basin includes Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and some two dozen small developing nations in Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America.(1) These countries are our close neighbors -- Washington, D.C., for example, is closer to Costa Rica than to San Francisco -- and form, in a very real sense, our "third border."

The major shipping lanes crisscrossing the region make it one of our major lifelines to the outside world, and, as a result, an area of crucial importance to the continued prosperity and security of the United States. The defense of the Caribbean, however, is complicated by hostile forces in Cuba and Nicaragua within easy reach of these shipping lanes.

Economic Importance

Nearly half our total exports and imports, representing over two-thirds of our seaborne foreign trade, pass through the vital commercial arteries of the Panama Canal, the Caribbean, or the Gulf of Mexico. Of the 11,000 ships that pass through the Panama Canal each year, over 60 percent are carrying cargo to and from U.S. ports, providing one-quarter of our nation's total seaborne imports.

Last year, the four principal U.S. Gulf ports -- Houston, Galveston, New Orleans and Mobile -- alone accounted for over one-third of our seaborne exports and one-quarter of our seaborne imports. The port of Miami, situated on the strategic Straits of Florida, handled about an eighth of our seaborne exports and a tenth of our seaborne imports.

In addition to these southern ports bordering the Caribbean Basin waterways, every other significant U.S. port is connected to the network formed by the major Caribbean shipping lanes. The port of New York, for instance, not only relies on the Basin's waterways for its trade with the region itself, but also depends on these same Caribbean sea lanes, including the Panama Canal, as the vital links for its extensive commerce with Asia.

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1. The group of Caribbean Basin countries is not the same as the group included in the Administration's Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI).

The Caribbean trade routes are of particular importance to the U.S. economy since they carry three-fourths of our imported oil. While some of this imported oil comes from the Caribbean Basin area itself, most notably from Mexico and Venezuela, much is shipped from the Persian Gulf and other producing areas to the approximately dozen Caribbean ports that serve as transshipment points for supertankers bringing petroleum destined for U.S. refineries.

The supertankers must offload oil at these transshipment points to smaller tankers since the U.S. eastern seaboard has no deep water port which can handle the very large tankers. Other supertankers deliver crude oil to the numerous refineries located within the Caribbean itself. Facilities such as those in Curacao and Aruba can process approximately five million barrels of crude oil per day.

The refined products are then transported by smaller tankers to East and Gulf Coast ports in the U.S. In addition, almost one half of Alaskan crude oil shipments pass through either the Panama Canal in small tankers or the newly constructed pipeline across Panama to be loaded onto smaller tankers in the Caribbean. This pipeline provides an easy target for terrorists.

Apart from our oil lifeline passing through the Caribbean, over half our imported strategic minerals pass through the Panama Canal or the Basin's sea lanes. Virtually all (over 90 percent) of the U.S. supply of cobalt, manganese, titanium and chromium, all vital for industrial or military use, comes either directly from Basin countries or from Africa, with the normal trade route passing through the Caribbean. The Caribbean states also provide three-fourths of our nation's aluminum requirements.

The Basin's shipping lanes also provide a vital sea link to the significant U.S. economic interests found in the region. U.S. direct investment in the Caribbean Basin countries accounts for over 8 percent of the total U.S. direct investment abroad -- some \$19 billion at the end of 1982.

In addition, U.S. trade with Basin countries is about one-eighth of the total U.S. world trade (exports plus imports), and again the dollar amounts are substantial -- almost \$68 billion of exports and imports in 1982.

U.S. imports from the region include significant amounts of oil, sugar, coffee, bauxite and meat while our major exports include transport equipment, industrial machinery, chemicals and grain.

Finally, the economic importance of the Caribbean Basin to this country has increased dramatically over the past decade as the U.S. has shifted its dependence on imported petroleum from the Middle East to Latin America.

For the first quarter of 1983, only 30 percent of U.S. oil imports came from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), down from 70 percent in 1977. As imports from OPEC have decreased, those from Latin America and the Caribbean have risen. Excluding OPEC member Venezuela, the share of U.S. gross imports of crude oil and refined products from Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 17 to 38 percent between 1977 and 1983.

When Venezuela is included, the total jumps to 45 percent. Oil imports from Mexico, in particular, have assumed greater importance, rising from 2 percent of the total in 1977 to 20 percent now.

### Strategic Importance

World attention has recently focused on the possibility of a closure of the Straits of Hormuz, the vital choke point of the Persian Gulf. Less well known, but of at least equal importance to the security of the U.S., is the possibility of a disruption by our adversaries of the strategically and economically crucial Caribbean shipping lanes.

Both the strategic importance and the vulnerability of the Basin's sea lanes have long been recognized. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, understood the strategic value of the Caribbean area when he observed that whoever controlled the island of Cuba could exercise effective control over all shipping bound for, or leaving, the port of New Orleans.

We as a nation are not accustomed to thinking of security threats in our own neighborhood, but examples from the past suggest that such threats could appear. During World War II our defenses in the Caribbean were so weak, our lifeline so exposed, that during the first six months of U.S. involvement, a handful of Nazi submarines, without a naval base in the area, sank more tonnage in the Caribbean (114 allied ships) than the entire German fleet did in the North Atlantic.

These German submarines acted with such impunity that they shelled refineries in Aruba and lay in wait for ships to transit the Panama Canal and enter the Caribbean. The logistical importance of the Caribbean soon became evident as over 50 percent of the supplies and reinforcements bound for the European and African theaters passed through ports in the Gulf of Mexico.

Today, in the event of a European crisis, a significant number of NATO reinforcements and half of the resupply material needed to reinforce the NATO allies would originate at these same Gulf ports.

It is not a coincidence that the Soviet Union is increasing dramatically its military support for Cuba. In both 1981 and 1982, deliveries of military equipment to Cuba were triple the

yearly average of the previous twenty years and were higher than any year since the 1962 missile crisis. Deliveries in 1983 have fallen off some but are still well above pre-1981 levels.

Cuba, which sits astride the vital sea lanes of communication, has become the most significant military power in the region after the U.S. Within its military arsenal are modern MIG jets and missile and torpedo patrol boats. Additionally, Cuba has three attack submarines in its Navy. Soviet combat ships regularly make port calls to Cuba. Cuban ground forces include 950 tanks.

In short, Cuba has become a significant military force with the potential for delaying the reinforcement of NATO in time of general war. Given the conventional imbalance that exists between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, such a delay could be decisive.

The USSR sees the southern flank of the U.S. as NATO's "strategic rear" and consistent with its military doctrine, is attempting to exploit what Soviet planners correctly see as a highly vulnerable area, affecting U.S. force projection and economic well-being.

Like the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea is, in a strategic sense, virtually an inland sea that can be bottled up by hostile air and naval power deployed in or near the strategic sea lines of communication.

The 53 mile wide Windward Passage, for instance, passes between the eastern tip of Cuba and Haiti and is by far the most important shipping lane between the Panama Canal and U.S. East Coast ports. Similarly, the narrow St. Vincent Passage in the Eastern Caribbean, only 27 miles wide, provides one of our most valuable lifelines to the Persian Gulf, Southern Africa, the Indian Ocean and South America -- all areas of crucial economic and strategic importance to the United States.

The crucial strategic and logistic link provided by the Panama Canal, which can be used by virtually all U.S. naval vessels except the large attack carriers, is similarly vulnerable, especially with Nicaraguan airfields only 400 miles away. Some of these airfields are being upgraded to accommodate sophisticated jet fighters, such as Soviet MIGs.

The 52 mile long Canal, with its numerous mechanical locks, could be effectively and fairly easily closed by a terrorist group or hostile air power by destroying a single lock or sinking a ship in transit. The vital trans-Panama oil pipeline provides an even easier target.

The vulnerability of our southern flank is a matter of serious concern since our ability to effectively project power to Europe, the Middle East and the Far East has always been dependent upon having a secure southern flank.



### Soviet Objectives and Intentions in Latin America

The immediate Soviet objective in Latin America is to enhance the USSR's influence at the expense of the U.S. To that end, Moscow seeks correct surface relations on the state level with most Latin American governments while working covertly with communist parties and front groups to promote causes compatible with Soviet interests.

At the same time, the USSR works directly and through its Cuban client to strengthen radical regimes and revolutionary movements, particularly in the Caribbean region.

Recent events in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Grenada, Suriname, and elsewhere clearly attest to active Soviet involvement in supporting revolutionary currents in the region. Expanded trade relationships with major South American countries have meanwhile provided Moscow with new footholds and prospects for expanding influence.

Yet distance from the USSR, awareness of traditional US sensitivity to developments in the Western Hemisphere, and the desire to avoid provoking a confrontation with the US have acted, and may continue to act, as constraints on Soviet behavior.

The Soviets may also be constrained by a lack of receptivity to their overtures by Latin Americans. Any impression of US weakness or vacillation, however, could cause small, defenseless states to seek accommodation with the Soviets.

#### Background: Paths to Power

Following the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, Moscow concentrated on strengthening the regime of Fidel Castro through massive injections of military and economic aid, to the point where Cuba became completely dependent on Soviet largesse and eventually a willing accomplice in Soviet political objectives.

Nonetheless, during the 1960's, Moscow apparently opposed supplying arms to the many small untested Latin American revolutionary groups which took their cue from the Cuban revolution. The Soviets also refused to support Cuban adventures in the area, arguing that the various leftist groups were not ready or able to achieve the success the Cubans had.

Moscow opted instead to emphasize the so-called via pacifica or parliamentary path to power, citing as prototype the emerging Marxist-leftist alliance in Chile. With Salvador Allende's overthrow in 1973, however, Moscow reassessed its doctrine and tactics, and gradually began giving greater emphasis to "armed struggle" as the means for turning the tide in favor of revolution, if circumstances were propitious.



Soviet/Cuban military collaboration in bringing Marxists to power in Angola in 1975-1976, and in providing direct military assistance to the Marxist regime in Ethiopia in 1977-1978, set the stage for a revival of the pursuit of revolution by violence in the Western Hemisphere.

With the success of the Sandinistas (who had relied heavily on Cuban arms and training) in Nicaragua in 1979, Moscow evidently became convinced that a new revolutionary tide was emerging in Latin America. Soviet media began openly advocating the violent overthrow of regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, as well as of the Pinochet regime in Chile. (Examples of such statements may be found in the Supplement)

### Cuba as Surrogate

An important, if not crucial ingredient in Soviet calculations pertaining to the Western Hemisphere has always been to weigh US reactions carefully at each step along the path. Since the missile confrontation in 1962, the Soviets have proceeded, albeit cautiously, in transforming Cuba into a viable base of operations and in allowing Havana to take the lead in dealing with revolutionary groups in third countries.

Meanwhile, the Soviet presence and stake in the Caribbean, anchored in Cuba, has grown incrementally. Soviet economic aid to Cuba in 1982 amounted to roughly \$4.6 billion, the equivalent to one-fourth of Cuba's GNP.

Aid to Cuba, some of which may be intended for other countries, accounts for over 60% of the USSR's global economic assistance program. An additional \$0.6 to \$1 billion in military aid was also provided last year. (Deliveries in 1982 exceeded those in 1981 by 2,000 metric tons; annual totals of the last two years have been the highest since 1962.)

Some 2,000-2,500 Soviet military and 6,000-8,000 civilian advisers are currently in Cuba, in addition to the Soviet brigade of 2,600-3,000 men. (The number of military advisers increased by 500 last year.)

The Soviet intelligence monitoring/telecommunications facility in Cuba is the largest such Soviet installation outside the USSR and monitors a wide spectrum of US civilian and military telecommunications.

Long range "Bear" reconnaissance and anti-submarine aircraft are deployed on a regular basis to Cuba. Soviet naval combatants regularly stage joint training exercises with the Cubans.

### Nicaragua: Wave of the Future in Central America?

With Cuba serving as a base for operations in all the Caribbean, Moscow sees Nicaragua as a possible door to Central

America and clearly hopes to fashion in Managua an instrument with some of the impact, but not the cost, of its Havana surrogate.

To avoid alienating Mexico, Panama, and others in the region, and particularly to avert any US retaliatory actions, the bulk of Soviet assistance to Nicaragua has been channelled mainly through Cuba. (Libya, some members of the communist bloc, and other countries, however, provide some of the Soviet arms arriving in the country.)

Some 6,000 Cuban civilian advisers are in Nicaragua to administer economic and technical aid programs; another 2,000 Cuban security advisers supervise the transfer of arms, and the development, modernization and expansion of military forces and facilities. They are also actively engaged in support of guerrillas operating against governments elsewhere in the region.

The USSR itself has so far sent about 50 advisers overtly and \$125 million in military equipment and supplies to Nicaragua. In addition there are currently 35 East German, 50 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) members, and some Libyan personnel in the country.

Nicaraguan military pilots and crews meanwhile have trained in Bulgaria and other East European locations. Any transfer of MiGs from Cuba, however, would presumably necessitate Soviet and Cuban agreement that the situation warranted such a move despite the risk of US counteraction.

#### Grenada: Escalation of the Stakes

The US and Caribbean joint action in Grenada brought the Soviets and Cubans a serious setback in the Caribbean. Moscow's decision to back the Maurice Bishop regime soon after it came to power reflected the then-optimistic communist estimate of revolutionary prospects in the region.

Soviet willingness to supplement political support for the new regime with military assistance over a five-year period attested also to a confidence that the risks involved were few. Nonetheless, Soviet insistence on channeling arms and aid through Cuba demonstrated continuing caution on Moscow's part.

The three secret Soviet-Grenadian treaties recovered in Grenada reveal Soviet willingness, even an eagerness, to be generous with military aid. The agreements, covering the period 1980-1985, provided for delivery of some \$25.8 million in weapons, ammunition, uniforms, trucks, and other logistical equipment -- so long as the regime worked to consolidate its Marxist revolutionary credentials. The treaty stipulated that all arms be shipped through Cuba.

Also in keeping with Soviet practice elsewhere, economic aid was less generous. During Bishop's tenure, the USSR was known to have provided to Grenada some \$10 million in trade credits and ~~economic and technical aid~~. Included in the known programs were promises for a satellite earth station and for conducting a feasibility study for a deep-water port.

Moscow may also have helped finance the some 700 Cubans on the island, the majority of whom were working on the Point Salines Airport (scaled to accommodate even the largest jet aircraft and which could have been used to facilitate Cuban troop flights to Africa) and constructing a battalion-sized military camp at Caligny.

Other Cubans were attached to almost every Grenadian ministry, handling political indoctrination and economic projects.

Despite the relative newness of their presence in the country, the Soviets had by the end of the Bishop regime made a substantial investment while keeping their involvement with Grenada largely indirect.

Nevertheless, the rescue mission was more important to Moscow's position in Nicaragua and Cuba given the much larger Soviet investment there, than merely the loss of prestige involved in the demise of the leftist regime in Grenada. The inability (or unwillingness) of the USSR to come to the aid of the pro-Soviet government was only too apparent.

The Soviets thus have tried to exploit what international and domestic US criticism there was of the invasion in part to deter similar actions against Nicaragua, but more broadly to try to undercut American and international support for what the USSR sees as an increasingly determined US administration.

#### The Caribbean: Future Prospects

Since the Grenadian operation, both Cuba and Nicaragua, presumably at Soviet urging, have been showing extreme caution in their dealings with revolutionary groups lest they provoke the US. Presumably there have also been new debates about revolutionary doctrine and possible recrimination between Moscow and Havana.

Moscow nonetheless will continue to be on the lookout for opportunities to generate and exploit differences between the US and the countries of the region but is meeting little receptivity.

Suriname, for example, has decided to scale back its Cuban connections. The day after the US/Caribbean action in Grenada, Oscar Osvaldo Cardenas, Cuba's Ambassador to Suriname, was expelled.

### South America: Trade, Aid and Covert Activity

While the USSR is interested in access to needed South American goods, such as foodstuffs and raw materials, the penetration of regional markets which have historically been dependent on Western suppliers remains an important objective.

The January, 1979 US partial grain embargo stimulated Moscow to greater activity here; trade with Argentina, Brazil and Mexico grew dramatically. Large Latin American trade surpluses, a result of the USSR's inability to provide durable export goods, limit the effectiveness of trade as a tool of influence, however, as do the regional suspicions of Soviet motives.

While, for example, fishing port rights granted in return for technical aid to Ecuador and Peru have led to some increase of Soviet prestige in these countries, evidence that Soviet vessels have engaged in intelligence collection and complaints of overfishing prevent translation of that presence into political leverage.

In Argentina, one of the USSR's major grain suppliers, the Soviets are pressing Buenos Aires to buy more to reduce the \$1.7 billion 1982 trade deficit. Hopes that they could sell military equipment in the aftermath of the South Atlantic conflict have not come to fruition. The Soviets are, however, seeking to expand their planning and construction role in Argentine energy development with more sales of hydropower and other equipment.

Peru purchased aircraft and other military equipment from the USSR during an earlier period of leftist military rule and still hosts between 100-125 Soviet military trainers and technicians. The Soviets would like to make further military sales and are pushing for greater participation in major civilian construction projects involving Soviet goods. Lima has just succeeded in rescheduling its over \$1 billion military debt with Moscow.

The Soviets have not followed the same policy of promoting state-to-state and trade relations with Chile. Since 1981 Moscow has overtly backed the Chilean Communist Party's (PCCH) dual policy of "armed struggle" coupled with attempts to work together with the non-violent opposition to the Pinochet regime. (See Supplement)

A new party line of unity and violence (in fact, a unity molded by combat) was enunciated in December, 1980. In January, 1981, the communists signed a unification agreement with seven other Chilean leftist political organizations. Within two weeks, Moscow began broadcasting PCCH explanations of the new policy and calls for armed insurgency.

Recently, Moscow underscored its endorsement of this tactic by publishing in the Soviet press a new PCCH "Manifesto" which called for Pinochet's violent overthrow.

### Long-Term Investment

Perhaps the Soviet program in Latin America with the greatest long term potential is that of educational exchange, i.e. scholarships to third world students to study in the USSR.

The number of Soviet Bloc academic grants offered annually to Latin American students jumped from 400 in the 1960's to over 6,000 today. Seven thousand Cubans were studying in the Soviet Union in 1979. Last year, 700 Nicaraguans were reported to be enrolled there and an additional 300 scholarships were being provided to Managua. There are also smaller groups from many other Latin American countries.

Soviet scholarships include free room, board, tuition, transportation, medical care and a small stipend. Since the programs began in the mid-1960's, some 6,800 Latin American students have utilized them.

About 3,000 Latin American students, including 1,600 Nicaraguans, are also studying in Cuba. Cuba has constructed 17 schools for foreigners, (each reportedly costing about \$2 million) and spends \$600,000 annually to operate them.

### Conclusion

The Soviets view Latin America as the "strategic rear" of the U.S. Effective projection of American power to Western Europe, the Middle East or the Far East is dependent on a secure southern flank. In the event of a European crisis, a significant number of NATO reinforcements and half the NATO resupply material would originate at Gulf Coast ports.

The Soviets, therefore, can be expected to try to turn Latin America, and especially Central America and the Caribbean, into an area of insecurity for the US. They hope to do this by supporting anti-American revolutionary movements and then using their support as leverage to turn revolutionary currents in a pro-Soviet direction.

It is a strategy of opportunism. Working with Fidel Castro, the Soviets strive to exacerbate existing problems in the Western Hemisphere. In general terms, Moscow seeks to reduce US options incrementally and increase the amount of men, attention, and materiel the US must commit to the Caribbean region. By focusing on the Caribbean, Moscow hopes to bring pressure on the U.S. to change its traditional policy of concentrating on European security.

SUPPLEMENT: SOVIET STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF  
REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA

Nicaragua

- 3/17/82 Soviet Ambassador to Mexico Rostislav Sergeyev warned that if the situation in Nicaragua gets worse, his government will help the Central American nation politically and diplomatically. (Cited by Mexico City NOTIMEX)
- 3/25/83 TASS on Andropov/Ortega Meeting:
- "Yuriy Andropov noted that the Soviet Union regarded with great sympathies the effort of the friendly Nicaraguan people to ensure economic and social transformation of their country, and rendered to them political support and material assistance in that."
- Yuriy Andropov expressed the conviction that Nicaragua will be able to uphold its freedom and independence and declared the sincere solidarity of the Soviet Union, of all Soviet people with the Nicaraguan people in their just cause."
- 10/25/83 Government Statement on Nicaragua:
- "The Government of the USSR resolutely condemns the aggressive US course with respect to Nicaragua and declares invariable solidarity of the Soviet people with the just struggle of the Nicaraguan people for independent and free development at their own choice. Interference in the affairs of Nicaragua must be stopped."
- 11/29/83 Soviet Ambassador to Nicaragua German Shlyapnikov (Cited by Panama City ACAN):
- Shlyapnikov explained that the USSR maintains a policy of solidarity with the Sandinist revolution, and that it supports the peace efforts that the Nicaraguan Government and the Contadora Group are engaging in to prevent a war in Central America."

Guatemala

- 6/26/83 Moscow Selskaya Zhiszn on Guatemalan Solidarity Day:
- "No repressions can stifle the Guatemalan people's struggle for freedom. The insurgents' detachments are being reinforced increasingly with new fighters who

dream of seeing their motherland free. For the sake of this bright goal and the happiness of their people, they are fully determined to fight on to complete victory."

### Chile

6/16/81 Radio Moscow, (in Spanish to Chile):

"Against the entrenched fascism which plans to continue oppressing the people until the end of the twentieth century, the Communist Party advocates the so-called people's holy right to rebellion."

"The rebellion will be woven with violent and nonviolent actions and its main characteristic will be the refusal to accept the legitimacy of fascism and to deny it any right to existence."

6/7/82 Radio Moscow in Spanish to Chile, broadcasting text of Chilean Communist Party Communiqué:

"The Political Committee of the Communist Party of Chile, PCCH, made a study of the current situation in the country and considered the urgent need to develop a mass struggle and common actions by all the forces who are against Pinochet's tyranny."

9/13/82 Radio Moscow in Spanish to Chile, quoting the Proclamation issued by the Chilean Communist Party on September 11:

"Everybody is expecting something to happen. Chileans: We, the Communists, tell you: Don't wait; get organized and fight. Nothing will be achieved without fighting."

1983/No.21 New Times: A Baryshev: "Pinochet on a Volcano"

"The recent events (May riots in Chile) testify to a new upsurge of the resistance movement against the fascist dictatorship." "All this confirms the conclusion drawn in the Communist Party document circulated in Santiago in April that the conditions have emerged for 1983 to become a year of decisive struggle for the Pinochet."

1983/No.29 New Times: "Igor Rybalkin: "Democracy Now!"

"The Communists are in the vanguard of the fighters for the restoration of democracy in their country. The Communist Party is consistently encouraging the mass struggle against the fascist regime and is working to bring about the unity of the Left forces and of the

opposition as a whole for the sake of the common goal -- the overthrow of the dictatorship."

Cuba

2/26/81 Brezhnev-Castro bilateral in Moscow:

"In present conditions, when the United States imperialists launched another anti-Cuban campaign, the USSR, as before, is siding with socialist Cuba and expressing full support for its principled policy of peace and friendship between peoples."

2/27/81 The Soviet Ambassador to Mexico:

"We will always support our friends and will never abandon them."

4/7/81 Brezhnev speech to the Czech Party Congress:

Cuba is an "inseparable part" of the socialist community.

9/15/81 Brezhnev in Moscow:

"The Cuban revolutionaries have traversed a long and difficult path. They have encountered and continue to encounter all sorts of challenges and provocations on the part of imperialism. But Cuba has proved that it is able to stand firm in the defense of its interests. Using this occasion, I would like to stress that the Soviet Union has been, is, and will be in solidarity with socialist Cuba."

11/6/81 Marshal Ustinov at the annual revolution ceremony:

"The United States must consider the consequences of its actions against Cuba."

2/9/82 Brezhnev greeting to 10th World Federation of Trade Unions Congress in Havana:

"The people of Cuba know that they have on their side the Soviet Union and the entire international working class, and they have on their side the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community... This solidarity is a reliable guarantee that no imperialist power will be able to throw it (Cuba) from its chosen path."



El Salvador

7/83      International Affairs, V. Krestyaninov: "Quiet Aggression against El Salvador"

"The Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community, all the forces of peace and progress the world over, side with the people of El Salvador in the struggle and strongly denounce the actions by the imperialists seeking to destabilize the situation and build up tensions in Central America."

Grenada

4/9/82      TASS on Tikhonov message to Bishop on Grenadan national day:

"The Soviet people solidarise (sic) with the people of Grenada waging the struggle for social progress, for the ensurance of independence and sovereignty of their country."

8/1/82      Pravda on USSR-Grenada Communique issued during Prime Minister Bishop's visit to Moscow:

"The Soviet side expressed solidarity with the Grenadan people in their efforts to overcome the grim colonial legacy and develop the country on a free, democratic basis. Support was expressed for the Grenadan people's inalienable right to build their own lives without any outside pressure or interference."

## NICARAGUAN REPRESSION OF MISKITO INDIANS

### THE CHRISTMAS EXODUS

Heightened repression of Miskito Indians in Nicaragua by the Nicaraguan government has once again gained outside attention. Since 1979, Sandinista practices of confiscation of private property and the forced export of local agricultural products has left the population facing severe shortages. The east coast Indian population has also had to face shortages of other food items, medical and school supplies, and clothing.

Despite Sandinista assertions concerning the releases of many Miskito political prisoners in the fall of 1983, and the Nicaraguan government's promotion of a limited amnesty, Miskito Indians continue to flee the country due to the lack of freedom.

The Christmas exodus of over one thousand Miskitos who fled to Honduras on foot and at times under attack by government troops took place against a background of Sandinista repression and cruelty. Because the Sandinistas have prohibited domestic and international press from traveling to the region without first obtaining a special permit, news from the east coast is difficult to obtain.

### The Miskitos

The East Coast region of Nicaragua has long been physically, historically, and culturally isolated from the country's mainstream. The population is primarily Indian, mostly Miskito Indians, and black.

They are traditionally religious (Moravian, Roman Catholic and Church of God), conservative in manner and keenly proud of their ethnic uniqueness. They were allowed relative autonomy, even under former Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

### What Has Been Happening

Despite Miskito support for the Sandinistas against Somoza, the Nicaraguan government in 1979 embarked on a program to "rescue" the Atlantic Coast. Cuban and Nicaraguan personnel began to flood into the area.

The net effect of this program, according to the human rights group, Freedom House, "is to deprive them of their socio-cultural identity, an identity based on a communal lifestyle, a democratically based selection of leadership and a passable way of life centered on their churches."

Almost immediately, the Indians' long-cherished autonomy began to fade away. Their traditional and freely elected leaders were replaced with Sandinista-appointed authorities. Many were Cuban; most were strangers. The lives of the Indians were redrawn along Marxist lines.

From the outset, the triumphant Sandinistas experienced difficulties bringing the Indians under their dominion. Demonstrations, some turning violent, broke out along the east coast as Indians and blacks protested the presence of Cuban security force advisors and teachers in 1980.

Beginning in 1981, thousands of Indians were evacuated from communities in the Rio Coco area and the northeastern coastal area in an attempt to move the entire population to areas under close government control.

The reason given for this was the danger of attacks by anti-Sandinista forces. However, the evacuations began before contra activity along the border with Honduras began in earnest. Even afterwards, the Sandinistas overreacted.

According to the Freedom House report: "The government's claim to be reacting to a security threat ... would be a gross over-reaction even if the charge of some guerrilla activity is verifiable. Eleven raids by small bands of guerrillas cannot justify one of the largest military operations in Nicaraguan history." (Emphasis added)

Nicaraguan troops attacked Miskito refugee camps in Honduras, where they had fled to escape Nicaraguan internal deportation; some Indians were buried alive, clergy and leaders were imprisoned; women and children were executed during the evacuation process; and whole villages were burned, along with their churches.

An American professor at the University of California at Berkeley, who has lived with and studied the Indians for the last fifteen years, found that Indian peoples have been subjected to a brutal systematic policy to force them into the Sandinista revolution stripped of Indian culture, identity, rights, lands, resources or freedom to influence their own destiny or to determine their own choices of how to live.

Briefly stated, the Sandinistas have implemented a policy of Indian ethnocide that is generated internally from their own Marxist ideology and racist attitudes. When the Indians resisted, the FSLN began an escalated program of counterinsurgency that continues unabated.

These are but a few of the FSLN violations of the Indian peoples: One-fourth of the coast's 165,000 Indians are either in "relocation camps" or refugee camps. One-half of Miskito and Sumo villages have been destroyed. One thousand Indian civilians

are in prison, missing, or dead. Indian rights to self-government, land, resources have been abolished.

Subsistence cultivation, fishing and hunting are strictly controlled to the point of non-existence in many areas and access to staple foods is so limited that hunger is an everyday problem and starvation a real possibility. Many villages have had no medicine or doctors for over two years. Freedom of movement is denied or severely restricted and in many areas canoes -- the people's major means of transport -- have been confiscated or their use prohibited.

More than 35 communities have suffered massive Sandinista military invasions during which innocent civilians are subjected to arbitrary arrests, killings, interrogations, torture, rapes, theft and destruction of property.

The Sandinistas try to force the people to divulge the location of the Indians' secret base camps and to terrorize the villagers so that they will not support or join the military resistance.

The Sandinista ruling council has banned all Miskito radio stations and publishing, prevented the teaching of indigenous languages, and has required clergy in areas under their control to submit sermons for Sandinista censorship prior to delivery. Indians must carry Sandinista-approved travel documents in order to move outside of their respective villages and towns. Children are recruited into the militia. Failure to report for guard duty results in imprisonment.

#### Miskito Objections

The Miskitos have not accepted this situation. In the words of one noted authority on Miskito Indians, contained in an article in the New York Times December 12, 1983:

"From the Indians' perspective, their war is a response to Sandinista military, economic and political oppression of their people and expropriation of their land under the guise of agrarian reform. The Indians say that the land is all they have to provide a living and to give to their children. Without it, they say, they would die as a people. They insist that their rebellion is more potent than those of the other major anti-Sandinista guerrilla factions because it has wider popular support, its goal is solely to push the Sandinistas from Indian land and villages, and it is being fought on home ground."

### The Refugees

Since the forced internal deportations began and other Sandinista violations of human rights intensified, thousands of Miskito Indians have sought a better way of life.

They have "voted with their feet," with most of them going to Honduras. They are accustomed to basic individual liberties and object to harsh Sandinista controls imposed under the guise of "the revolution."

In Honduras, the Indians have been able to engage in farming of private plots, although most have been forced by economic circumstances to remain in refugee camps assisted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) until they are able to return to Nicaragua.

### The Christmas Exodus

The story of the latest group of Miskito Indians to flee shows only too well the seriousness of Sandinista repression. It illustrates not only the dangers of attempting to evade a harsh, Marxist-Leninist government, but also the cynicism and deception of that government in the face of international public criticism.

On December 19, 1983, the residents of the resettlement town of Francia Sirpe in northeastern Nicaragua attended Mass in a festive mood, knowing that plans had been made to depart to Honduras on the following day. According to the Indians, the Sandinistas were preparing to transplant the whole Indian population of Francia Sirpe to the mountainous region north of Managua.

Two Roman Catholic priests, both American citizens, who had long worked with the Miskito Indians, were told of their intentions and decided to accompany them. The villagers had voted on the question of leaving, with the majority deciding to leave, according to Father Wendelin Shafer, one of the priests, because they "lacked the freedom to live their own culture" as they want to live it and have always lived it.

It was a matter of escaping the control of a government that was oppressing them. As Bishop Salvador Schlaefer put it: "The Miskito people had the idea that the government tended toward Marxism and Communism and ... they wanted respect for the temples of God and for their religion."

Bishop Schlaefer was the other priest who accompanied the Indians, continuing a career of spiritual service to the Indians that has spanned over 30 years.

Other refugees reported later in Honduras that many villagers had been convinced to go when they heard the experiences of Miskito political prisoners who had been released by the

government, relaying experiences of torture and beatings while being held in Sandinista prisons.

One of the former prisoners who made the trek to Honduras bore bayonet marks on his neck. He reported that he had been jailed because he tried to get medicine for his sick brother in a nearby town.

He said the Sandinistas arrested him because he did not have the appropriate travel documentation. When he did not return, his ill brother inquired as to his whereabouts to authorities and was also thrown into jail.

#### Government Attacks

During the second day of their exodus from Nicaragua, Sandinista troops attempted to intercept them, but were prevented from doing so by a group of armed Indians from whom the village leaders had requested protection.

Father Shafer reported in Honduras that he thought the Sandinistas were trying to attack the column. According to villagers, Nicaraguan government planes flew overhead on two different days, apparently trying to spot the marchers.

At the same time, the Nicaraguan government had circulated false reports to the press regarding the villagers' departure, alleging that they were coerced into leaving by an armed anti-Sandinista force and that they had kidnapped Bishop Schlaefer and an American priest.

Apparently the Sandinistas were confident that they could prevent the fleeing Indians from reaching the Honduran border. Sandinistas repeatedly attacked points where the villagers were expected to be planning to cross the river from Nicaragua into Honduras, but all Miskito Indians were able to slip across on December 23.

Having been alerted by the Nicaraguan government attempt to use the media to avert a propaganda disaster created by a thousand Miskito Indians fleeing their repression, the Honduran Army, along with the UNHCR, was able to assure the Indians' safety once they reached the other side of the river.

Both Bishop Schlaefer and Father Shafer arrived safely, despite genuine worries for their safety after the Sandinistas had announced to the world press that the Bishop had been killed. Nicaragua and other governments which operate with totalitarian methods often will claim someone has died even before they are actually able to accomplish the killing.

The statements of these men, as well as the testimony of the Miskitos themselves, cast new light on the deplorable record of human rights violations perpetrated by the Sandinistas.

### Current Situation

The continuation of forced internal deportation, harassment, suppression of freedom of religion, freedom of movement, freedom to choose one's political leaders, freedom to choose one's place of residence, and other violations of human rights are the reality for Miskito Indians in Nicaragua.

The recent limited amnesty has been loudly proclaimed by the Sandinistas but the Miskitos as well as the international community appear justified in their skepticism. In fact, recent reports indicate that the Indians have been so unresponsive to the amnesty proposal that Sandinista soldiers have crossed the border into Honduras and attempted to force some of the Indians to return, presumably to demonstrate the amnesty's attractiveness.

This view was underscored by the use of Sandinista troops to attack innocent Miskito villagers trying to leave their homelands and by the clumsy attempts of the Sandinistas to lay the ground work for the murder of the American citizen priests who had accompanied the Indians.

As a Miskito leader recently told the visiting Berkeley professor: "I may die, but that's not important because the boys will carry on our struggle. I'm going to stay here and fight to free my people and our land. Please give fraternal revolutionary greetings from an Indian warrior to your people and tell them that we are not coming out of the bush until we get our land back."